

underground facilities, as called for by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Members of the "Common Ground" Study Team will discuss this report at this symposium. OPS will discuss and take suggestions regarding criteria for awarding authorized grants provided in TEA-2 1 to one call centers. RSPA will also provide an update on current damage prevention projects, most notably those dealing with public education. The Damage Prevention Quality Action Team (DAMQAT), will report on the pilot test, results from the "Call Before You Dig" public education campaign and the next steps that will be necessary to make the campaign a nationwide effort.

**DATES:** The symposium will be held on Wednesday, June 30, 1999, from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm.

**ADDRESSES:** The symposium and ceremony will be held at the Marriott at Metro Center, 775 12th Street NW, Washington, DC 20005. Reservations can be made by calling (202) 737-2200. A block of rooms is being held under "U.S. Department of Transportation/Damage Prevention Public Meeting."

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Eben M. Wyman, (202) 366-0918, or by e-mail (eben.wyman@rspa.dot.gov), regarding the subject matter of this notice.

### **Information on Services for Individuals With Disabilities**

For information on facilities or services for individuals with disabilities or to request special assistance at the meetings, contact Eben Wyman at the address or phone number listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** as soon as possible.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **1. Report on Damage Prevention Best Practices**

The morning session of this symposium will focus on the "Common Ground" Damage Prevention Best Practices Study Team. RSPA's Office of Pipeline Safety established this team to identify effective underground facility damage prevention practices, consistent with TEA-21. Section 6105 of TEA-21 authorized DOT to undertake a study of damage prevention practices associated with existing one-call notification systems. The purpose of the study was to evaluate and identify damage prevention practices that are most effective in protecting the public, excavators, and the environment and in preventing disruptions to public services and damage to underground facilities. RSPA established the

Common Ground Team to conduct the study. TEA-2 1 also authorized grant funding for Fiscal Years 2000-200 1, subject to appropriations. The grants will be used as an incentive to improve operational efficiency and reliability of one-call systems. Such improvements will bring increased protection of all underground facilities and will benefit the general public. RSPA will provide comments on planning for the grant program in the afternoon session of this symposium, and RSPA and NTSB invite comments and suggestions on how these grants should be allocated.

The Common Ground Study identifies and evaluates existing practices related to damage prevention programs that are most effective in protecting the public, excavators, and the environment and in preventing disruptions and damage to public services and underground facilities. Study Team participants represent a broad range of utilities and distribution systems, highway departments, railroads, excavators, municipal governments, trade associations and academia. This report represents an unprecedented multi-industry, multi-disciplinary collaboration working toward the goal of improving the protection of all underground facilities.

The team will suggest many paths forward to continuous improvement and emphasize the need for data collection and evaluation in order to measure improvements. The team will discuss the criticality of communication among all the parties to construction around underground facilities and the need for collective responsibility for successful excavation: careful planning and design, appropriate and timely one-call center actions, accurate locating and marking, as well as careful digging of the soil. The report focuses on how to challenge the full spectrum of participants in the damage prevention process.

##### **2. Presentation of National Public Education Campaign**

The afternoon portion of the symposium will address other damage prevention initiatives, especially public education programs. RSPA established the joint government/industry Damage Prevention Quality Action Team (DAMQAT), in October 1996. DAMQAT's mission is to increase awareness of the need to protect underground facilities and to promote safe digging practices. DAMQAT is composed of representatives from federal and state government agencies, gas and hazardous liquid pipeline trade associations, a contractor, a one-call systems association, and the insurance and telecommunications industries. The

## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Research and Special Programs Administration**

[Docket No. RSPA-99-4029; Notice 3]

### **Pipeline Safety: One-Call Systems Study**

**AGENCY:** Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA); Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) .

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces a two-part public symposium RSPA will conduct with the National Transportation Safety Board to report the progress in various efforts currently underway in damage prevention of underground facilities. Last year, RSPA established a study team to evaluate existing damage prevention methods to reduce the risk of damage to

team launched a successful nationwide damage prevention public education campaign in Virginia, Georgia, and Tennessee that ran from May through October 1998. By use of radio public service announcements, trade press ads, bill inserts, public relations events, promotional materials, and a training video, the campaign promoted education and increased communication among all parties involved at a construction site. DAMQAT's efforts increased stakeholder knowledge on underground damage prevention, including use of one-call systems, and effective ways to locate underground facilities at excavation sites. RSPA and members of DAMQAT will provide information regarding their current activities at the symposium.

### **3. Other Damage Prevention Initiatives**

Aside from discussion of the grant provision contained in TEA-2 1, other damage prevention and public education topics will be discussed. These include other examples of what damage prevention programs might look like. Examples are promotion of a nationwide toll-free number and a decal program for excavation equipment. The nationwide toll-free number is sponsored by One Call Systems International to facilitate routing of phone calls when excavators do not have the center number or there are multiple state one call centers. Peter King, Executive Director of the American Public Works Association, will speak on the pilot testing of a decal program, which promotes the placement of pictograph decals, which include the toll free number, for new and "after market" equipment. These decals serve as the last line of defense against facility damage. At the symposium, RSPA and NTSB will solicit an open discussion of the best way to implement these initiatives.

### **4. Recognition of Volunteers**

RSPA and NTSB recognize the contributions of over 170 volunteers who developed the report on best practices in damage prevention and who served on the DAMQAT. A wide variety of interests and organizations participated in these efforts, including six associations representing underground facility owners and operators, three associations representing contractors, two associations representing public utilities and one call centers, two federal agencies within DOT, two associations representing state pipeline and utility regulatory agencies, an association of

railroads, an association of contract locators, and nine different state DOTs.

RSPA and NTSB encourages the public to attend and participate in this public symposium.

Issued in Washington, DC on May 21, 1999.

**Richard B. Felder,**

*Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.*

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